

CHRISTMAS TREE SHIP/THOMPSON

T H O M P S O N



The Delta Lumber Company of Detroit, headed by E. L. Thompson, platted the village of Thompson in 1888. By 1907 the population had reached 900. However, lumbering activities in Thompson died out quickly. Thompson was the last port of call for the “Christmas Tree Ship,” *Rouse Simmons*, one of the last schooners on the Great Lakes, which sank in 1912. Built in 1868 to carry lumber, the three-masted vessel became Chicago’s “Christmas Tree Ship” when Herman Schuenemann purchased an interest in it in 1910. Around 1876 the Schuenemanns had begun transporting trees from northern Michigan and Wisconsin to Chicago. Bound for Chicago on November 22, 1912, Herman boarded the *Simmons*, which was loaded with trees from Thompson’s forests, and sailed into a fierce snowstorm that plunged the ship to the bottom of Lake Michigan. In 2006, Thompson Township sponsored a Michigan Historical Marker to tell the story of the village and the vessel.

Location: Two blocks east of the intersection of M149 & County Road 435
Applicant/Sponsor: Thompson Township
Marker Erected: 2006
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